

Small Business Person

Revolutionizing the Diaper Industry from Bozeman, Montana

Kim Ormsby, CEO and President of The Natural Baby Company, has been named SBA's 2010 Montana Small Business Person of the Year.

After being laid off as a corporate exec in 2001, Ormsby started an online retail store called "Montana's Diaper Store" from her laundry room. Montana's Diaper Store grew each year and today, it is known as "The Natural Baby Company".

The Natural Baby Company now carries their own label of cloth diapers, has catapulted the growing industry forward and is emerging as one of the top-selling cloth diapers in the global market.

Ormsby was forced to switch to cloth diapers as her oldest daughter had eczema, a common skin problem that can be exacerbated by the drying capabilities of disposables, as well as the chemicals found in them. At that time cloth diapers were hard to find and Ormsby decided to start the online store and sell her favorite cloth diaper brand, plus some toys and other infant and toddler products. She became passionate about cloth diapers, had tried about every kind on the market, knew their shortcomings and was eager to find a solution.

Soon Ormsby found herself, along with a local seamstress, designing and making a better cloth diaper. She added this diaper to her online store. They also invented other products, such as an organic diaper balm that comes in a stick, like deodorant, so parents can slather it on a baby's bottom without getting their hands dirty. Her husband, Duane, made the so-called "Magic Stick" in their kitchen after the kids went to bed. He still does, although now they sell 1,000 units a month.

In 2009, Ormsby decided to try her hand at invention again. She wanted an even better diaper. She came up with Gro Baby, now named Gro Via. Gro Via is a colorful, waterproof shell with an organic cotton liner that snaps in. When the diaper is soiled, the liner is removed – not the complete diaper.

The modular system means parents have less to buy and therefore, less expensive. Plus there's less laundry to do and less water consumed. Secondly, the systems can be partly disposable. Instead of putting in a cloth liner, a disposable is put in. The disposable biodegrades in about 90 days and is free from chlorine, plastics, dyes and fragrances.

The Gro Via line has exploded in the diapering world, selling about 4,000 diapers a month to more than 290 retailers throughout the world. This success has propelled the company into a multi-million dollar business and moved the diapers to the forefront of the eco-friendly diaper market.

Parts of the company are just like they were when Kim and Duane started it: A work-at-home seamstress in Winston, Montana, makes each of their high-end, boutique diapers called “Kiwi Pie” by hand. This seamstress not only produces 800 diapers a month in her house, but also is a busy mom raising three kids.

Ormsby has stuck to her original values. Ormsby said she wants the company to be good for her family, good for her employees’ families, the families of the people who buy their products and the Earth on which we all live.

Ormsby’s creativity and commitment to the environmentally aware parent is why she was named SBA’s 2010 Small Business Person of the Year.